MASAMUNE SHIROW

APPLESEED™

BOOK FOUR

Mike Richardson · publisher
Neil Hankerson · vp of operations
Randy Stradley · creative director
Barbara Kesel · managing editor
Ronnie Noize · marketing director
Bob Schreck · special projects director
Andy Karabatsos · controller
Mark Anderson · general counsel
Cece Cutsforth · design director
Jerry Prosser · editorial coordinator
Jeff Gillis · shipping manager

Jennie Bricker, Debbie Byrd, Chris Chalenor, Bob Cooper, Brian Gogolin, Peet Janes, Kij Johnson, Edward Martin III, Diana Schutz, Monty Sheldon, Suzanne Taylor, Dan Thorsland, Chris Warner, John Weeks, Ryder Windham
· Editorial staff

Randy Bowen, Mark Pedersen, Sue Ostermann
· Product development

Theresa Fogle, Pamela Fricker, Scott Fuentes, Adam Gallardo, Cary Grazzini, Heather Hale, Evelyn Harris, Jim Johns, Diane Kintrea-Wassman, Todd Knight, Debra Koch, Todd McAllister, Perry McNamee, Jay Moreau, David Nestelle, Brian Neubauer, Cara Niece, Cary Porter, Rich Powers, Professoruss, Meleah Rutherford, James Sinclair, Carolyn Stinson, Kai Thomaslan, Scott Tice, Sean Tierney, Marty Todd, Tim Tran
· Production staff

John Dennett, David Desjardins, Heather Gridley, Ray Gruen, Joe Kamei, Egon Selby, David Weigel, Kris Young
· Marketing staff

Kris Barnett, Tod Borleske, Dave Broughton, Charissa Butler, Kimberly Chandler, Michael Cox, Chris Creviston, Raylene Dusenberry, Lorrie Flaschner, Kim Haines, Dale LaFountain, Ben Radcliffe, Rebecca Rautenberg, Deborah Rogers, Tiffiny Saylor, Mike Van Horn
· Operations staff

MASAMUNE SHIROW

story and art
MASAMUNE SHIROW

translation
DANA LEWIS and TOREN SMITH

touch-up art and lettering
L. LOIS BUHALIS

original publisher and editor
HARUMICHI AOKI
(SEISHINSHA)

original U.S. publisher and editor
GREG S. BAISDEN
(ECLIPSE INTERNATIONAL)

English version produced by
STUDIO PROTEUS

cover art by
MASAMUNE SHIROW

collection editor
KIJ JOHNSON

collection designer
BRIAN GOGOLIN

DARK HORSE COMICS

Kongo Rakanryu Ganz

TATARA SOKAK

A former Special Air Service (Cyborg Battalion) sergeant. After serving in combat throughout Asia, he met Ganz and formed a mercenary team. At 27, his pride and joy is his Japan built multi-purpose sensor array.

Missu Tenmu

MAGUS

A multi-talented guy—and 35-year-old confirmed bachelor—with 14 years of detective work behind him. Personal life murky.

MORTON

Former U.S. Marine re-deployed with U.S.S.R. forces after the big blow-up. Discharged for making trouble, returned to Chicago—his family dead in the firestorm. Became involved with an Olympus nurse, returning with her to the city state. Joined ESWAT two years later.

Chief of State Nike

LANCE

Commander of ESWAT. No family, personal details not known. Although reporting to the Security Forces Director known as "The Colonel," he has direct links to the Secretary of the Interior (Chief of State Nike), and enjoys her total confidence. He is personally in charge of ESWAT combat training.

DEUNAN KNUTE

A former member of the L.A.P.D. SWAT team, her investigative sense is poor and her character worse. However, complicated bloodlines have left her with superb motor control, excellent vision, and a resilient body. At 22, she's the perfect complement for Briareos and the undisputed Queen of Debt.

Hitomi

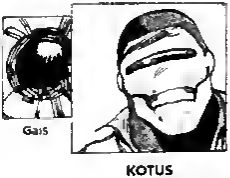
Yoshitsune

Artemis Alpeia

Gavilov III

The Council "7 CPU"

The Director



Gais

KOTUS

Olympus robot police unit. Uses many bio-special components. Indispensable member of the bomb disposal and booby trap squads, and invaluable in operations against precision machinery. Often called "the walking bulls-eye" because impervious to most small arms fire.

Jinrai Seed™

CHARACTER DATA

ABU HAMARU GRAYGUN

A professional killer hiring himself out to different countries as a Combat Tactics Advisor. Not interested in the old "West East" or "North South" divisions. Hired by ESWAT as a consultant heads up the unit's tactical division. Apparently a member of Mensa but details not known.

Argus (FBI)

Athena

FANG BLACKBONE (Beryl A10-F)

One of the finest Olympus combat biorolds ever grown in Olympus law enforcement, biorolds generally hold a position analogous to the old police dogs. At present only three of this model exist, one on permanent loan to Lance.

SUDO SHIHEI

Once ESWAT's top hand-to-hand combat instructor, Sudo was returned to the main unit when medical advances made his skills obsolete. Father of twins. Wealthy.

BRIAREOS HECATONCHIRES

Originally a black from the Mediterranean, Briareos was used as a terrorist by the KGB while still a child. He sought political asylum in the former U.S.A. after killing his unit's commander on operations—for which he was put on the international "most wanted" list as an assassin. After meeting an agent from Special Security Forces, he began operating as a partner with the man's daughter, Deunan Knute. Caught in an explosion, the 31 year old survived only by undergoing a full cyborg body replacement—and has been making modifications ever since.

Dr. Matthew and his nurse

BORGANOFF

Former GRU Spetsnaz instructor. Apparently once an officer with the personal external espionage team of the chairman of the Supreme Soviet. Joined ESWAT directly from the U.S.S.R. Loves interrogations, but for some reason not using truth serums. Speaks excellent Japanese with a Hokkaido accent.

MEDION RA PANI

Former Green Beret (the old U.S. version). Fled racist Imperial Americana and sought political asylum in Olympus. An excellent shot, but quite weak in hand-to-hand combat. A single 18-year old somewhat infatuated with Magus, she becomes furious when called an "overgrown girl scout."

Yoshino

Dr. Slade

Kainis Kaineus

APPLESEED™ Book Four: The Promethean Balance

Published by Dark Horse Comics
10956 SE Main Street
Milwaukie, OR 97222

Original Appleseed art and story trademarked and copyright © 1991 Masamune Shirow and Seishinsha
English translation © 1991 Studio Proteus
Cover painting © 1991 by Masamune Shirow
Appleseed logo designed by Tom Orzechowski
All other material and compilation © 1993 Dark Horse Comics, Inc. All rights reserved
In this English edition of Appleseed, the artwork has been reversed to read left-to-right for the American audience

ISBN: 1-878574-52-3

Printed in Canada

First edition: April 1993
0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

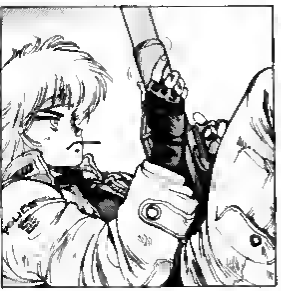
MASAMUNE SHIROW'S

GHOST IN THE SHELL

BOOK 4

CREATED, WRITTEN, AND ILLUSTRATED

BY MASAMUNE SHIROW

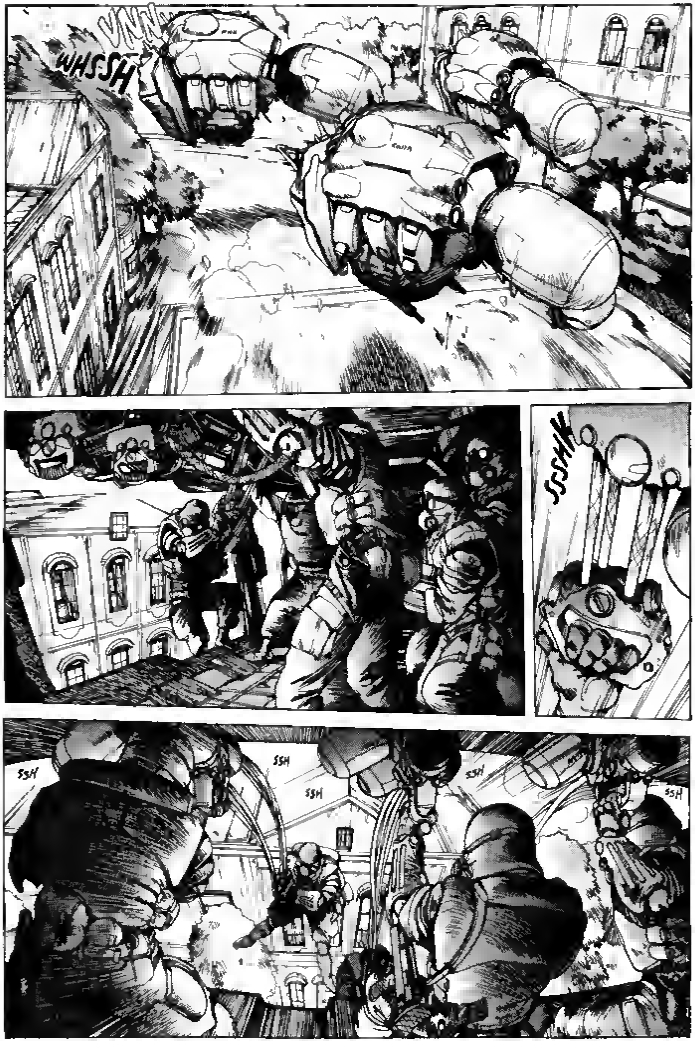


In this day and age when the need to coëxist with science and technology can no longer be denied, the only questions we can legitimately ask are how best to use these tools and how best to avoid their misuse. If we fail to find effective means of controlling them and retreat instead to the comfort of unthinking emotionalism, if we hamper scientific and technological progress—or, conversely, allow them to run out of control—then we should not be surprised to find ourselves extinct within the not-too-distant future... and with us, the planet itself."

—letter from A. Athena to Senator Boyle

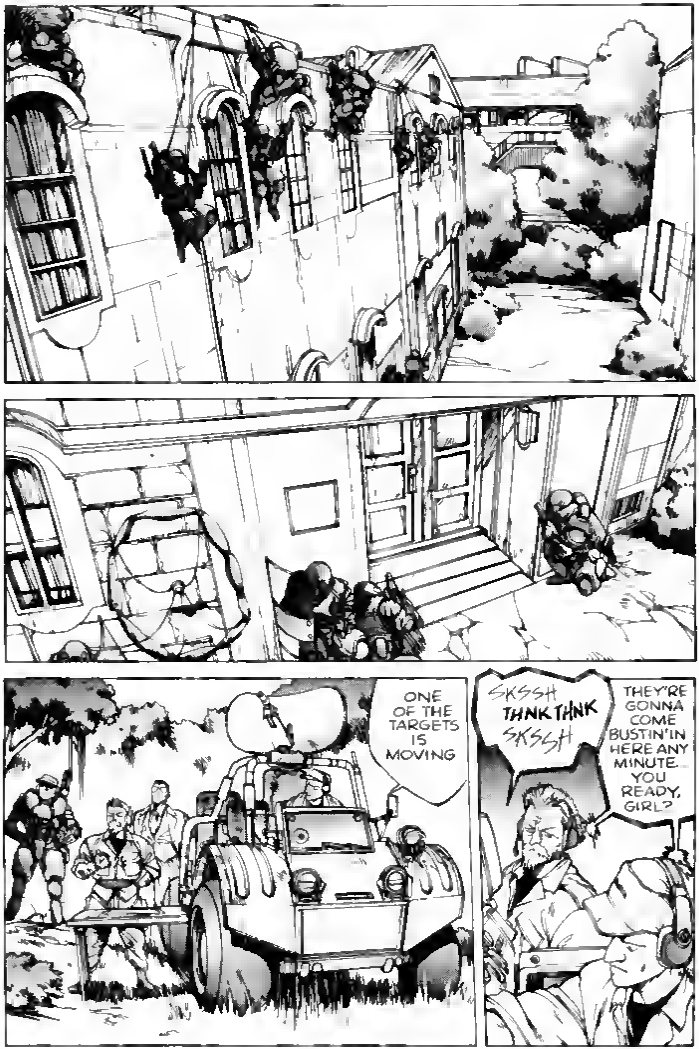
· 20. DRY RUN

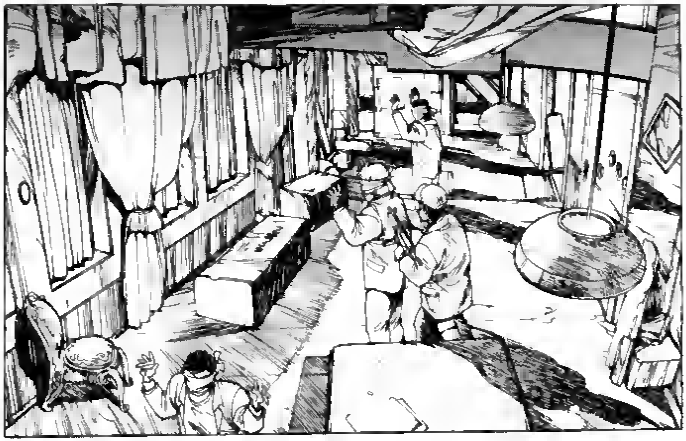
WHOOSH
WWNNWWNN

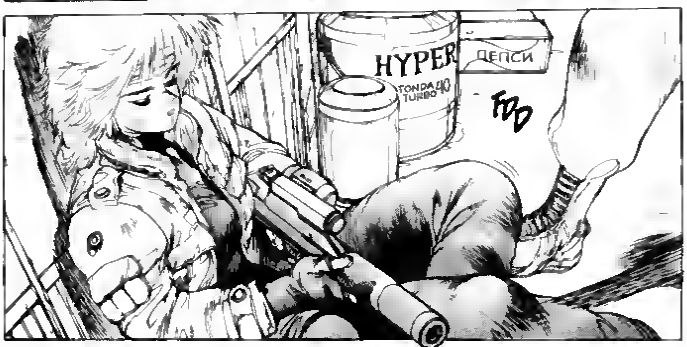

WHSSH
SSSHK
SSH
SSH
SSH
SSH
SSH

WHDD
WHD
WHD
WHD

CHAK
WHHTT
SHEE


ONE OF THE TARGETS IS MOVING
SKSSH THNK THNK SKSSH
THEY'RE GONNA COME BUSTIN'IN HERE ANY MINUTE. YOU READY, GIRL?




HYPER
ТОНДА 80
TURBO
ДЕПСИ
FOD

HEY, YOU AWAKE?
DELNAN!

SHEE

22, 105, 45— JOIN THE FIRST WAVE, TAKE DOWN ROOM 28 USING FIVE MEN...
ESWAT
USING HOSTAGES AS SHIELDS. Hmmm, I DON'T LIKE THE WAY YOU GIRL SCOUTS* OPERATE. DIDN'T DO YOU ANY GOOD AGAINST THE MUNMA CROWD, DID IT?
HYPER
WHAT DOES SOME TIN CYBORG'S SEX DOLL KNOW ABOUT IT, HUH?!
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW!
ALL SQUADS SET FOUR... THREE...
TWO
ONE—

* Deunan's derogatory term for former members of the United States Army Green Berets—prejudice learned from her father. The Munma Holy Republic Deunan refers to the "Second Vietnam" where the U.S. and the Soviet Union fought in a hell of sand against suicide troops and terrorism

GO!
SPAK
KSSH
KPOF!
HNNG!
DAMN!
KOFF
KOFF
KOFF

SKSSAH

YAAHH!
SKRASSH
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
!
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
WHOD
SKSSH

SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK

SKRASSH
BRRTAT
AA!

SPAK
SPAK
SPAK SPAK
BRRTTT
CLANG
HANK!
FDD

WHOD
...
CHRIST, EVEN A KOTUS COULD TAKE YOU OUT!
ROOM 2-B CLEAR... ONE DOWN, ONE DEAD... HOSTAGES ALL OKAY
UHHG
C'MON, YOU CORPSES... ON YOUR FEET! Heh, heh...
BEUNAN
LOSSES FOUR

IT'S NOT THE AVERAGE THAT COUNTS -- WHAT MATTERS IS THE ABILITY AVAILABLE AT THE TOP
I WANT TO SEE THE SIX ON MY LIST IN BRIEFING ROOM C-4 IN FIFTEEN MINUTES
YOU KEEP ALL THE GOODIES FOR YOURSELF!
HEY, NEXT TIME IT'S THE REAL THING!
REMEMBER, YOU PROMISED - IF YOU LOST WE MEET AT ROB'S BAR I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT THE GATE IN THIRTY MINUTES, OKAY?
YOU WISH, JERK!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU LAUGHING ABOUT, PAN!?!
IF THIS WAS REAL, I'D BE DEAD NOW!!
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A CLUMSY ASSHOLE!!
SAY WHAT?!
YOU HEARD ME!! AND YOU BETTER HEAR THIS!! IF I EVER HAVE TO TEAM UP WITH YOU AGAIN--
YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE I SHOOT!!
YOU STUCK-UP LITTLE BITCH!!
C'MON AND TRY IT!!
F'CHRIST'S SAKE YOU TWO!!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT IDIOTIC BROAD SQUALLING ABOUT NOW--?
MUST NEED A SHRINK
MAGUS
MAGUS!
YEAH?

I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO GO THROUGH THE WINDOW WITH FIVE MEN! WHY DID YOU IGNORE MY ORDERS?!
SIR?
SO I'D ONLY LOSE FOUR MEN INSTEAD OF FIVE.
THEN WHY DID YOU SEND FOUR MEN TO CERTAIN DEATH?
WELL?
BE AT BRIEFING ROOM C4 IN TEN MINUTES THE COLONEL'S WAITING, SO MOVE IT!
WHA--?! RIGHT NOW?!
AW, C'MON... I GOT A DATE...!
WHAT THE HELL KIND OF COMEDY ACT WAS THAT?! DO IT AGAIN! FROM THE TOP!
AREN'T WE DONE YET?
OH, FINE!

APPLESEED BOOK 4:

THE
PROMETHEAN
BALANCE

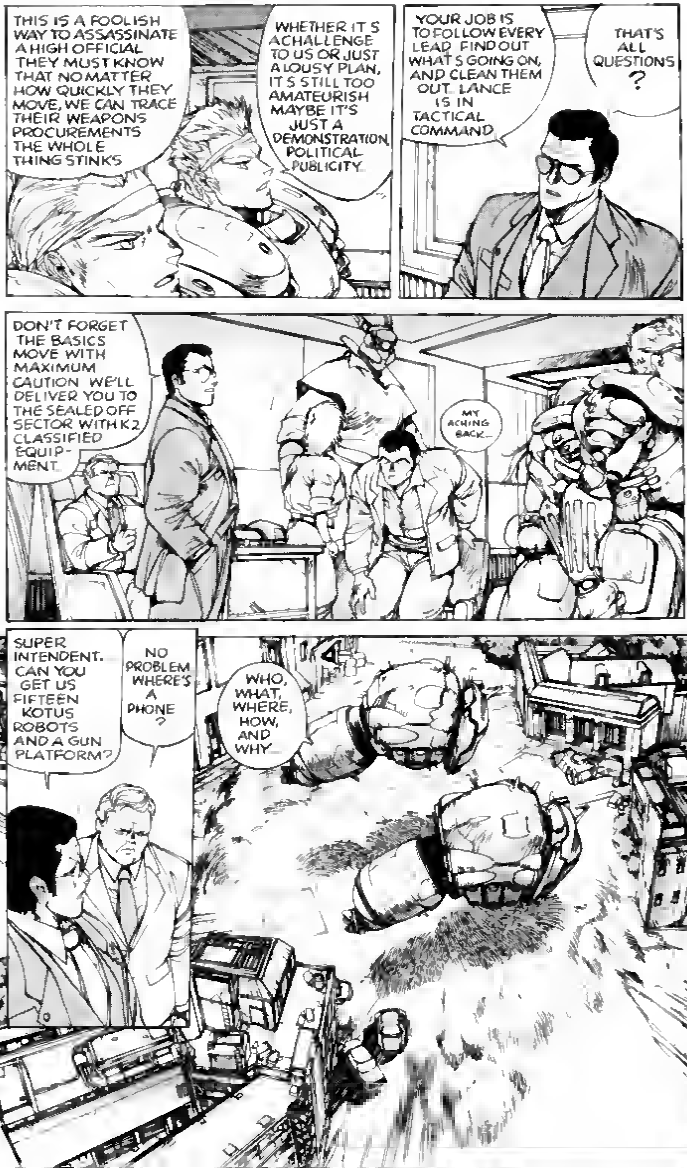
TWO DAYS AGO, A MAN CONTACTED OUR SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU AT HEADQUARTERS ASKING FOR HELP.
HE'S THE HEAD OF APPLIED TECHNO-LOGICAL RESEARCH AT BEZEKRIC TECHNICA. HIS FAMILY HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED AND THE CRIMINALS WERE DEMANDING THAT HE PRODUCE A SET OF PARTS IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR LIVES
SO WE MADE THE SWAP AND NINETY MINUTES LATER HIS FAMILY WAS RELEASED THEY'RE SAFE
AS FOR SPECIAL INVESTI GATIONS SIR?
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, THE CRIMINALS FOUND THE TRANSMITTERS WE PUT ON THE PARTS BUT WE MANAGED TO KEEP A TAIL ON THEM ANYWAY
THE PARTS WERE LOADED INTO EIGHT VANS, BUT TWENTY MINUTES AGO WE LOST TRACK OF THE LAST OF THE VANS AND THE TWO INVESTIGATORS THAT HAD BEEN TRACKING IT
LABORATORY

AS SOON AS WE PICKED UP THE FAMILY, WE CLOSED THE DISTRICT TIGHT-- AIRPORTS, TUBES, PORT FACILITIES, ALL LOCKED DOWN
MEANING THE PREY'S GONE TO GROUND
HERE'S WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR
I PRESUME THESE PARTS AREN'T SOMETHING THE CRIMINALS COULD LET ANYONE SEE...
SMALL ENOUGH TO LOAD INTO VANS, BUT TOO BIG TO HIDE...
ALL TOGETHER NOW
BREASTPLATE EXO FOR A LANDMATE MAIN FRAME HIP ASSEMBLY ENOUGH FOR ONE MACHINE
SUPER COOLING TANK FOR A HERMES CONTROL COIL SMALL THERMAL SHELL FOR A COMPACT FUSION REACTOR.

THIS IS NO NORMAL LANDMATE. JUDGING FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE HIP AND LEG ASSEMBLY, IT'S BEEN DESIGNED TO BE WORN BY A CYBORG
AND ONE MORE THING... SIZE.
ASSEMBLING JUST THE PARTS WE KNOW OF WOULD PUT IT OVER THIRTEEN FEET HIGH. SO IT'S AT LEAST TWICE AS BIG AS A NORMAL LANDMATE.
THE FINAL ASSEMBLY AND ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES REQUIRE LARGE AMOUNTS OF WATER AND ELECTRICITY. TWELVE LOCATIONS WITHIN THE INVESTIGATION AREA HAVE REGISTERED SHARP INCREASES IN WATER AND POWER CONSUMPTION OVER THE LAST HOUR.
OF THE TWELVE, ONLY SIX HAVE THE KIND OF SPACE AND EQUIPMENT IT WOULD TAKE TO ASSEMBLE THE GIANT
IF YOU HAD ACUTE APPENDICITIS, WOULD YOU ASK A KOTUS TO DO THE OPERATION?
LET ME EXPLAIN THE BACK-GROUND
IF YOU'VE GOT IT PINNED DOWN THAT CLOSE, WHY NOT USE ONE OF THE ROBOT GUN PLATFORMS?

ONE WEEK FROM TODAY, THERE WILL BE A SECRET CONFERENCE AT THE TOP OF THE BEZEKRIC* DOME BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF IMPERIAL AMERICANA AND THE UNITED SOVIET SOCIALIST STATE REPUBLICS.
THESE ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE NEGOTIATIONS, ARRANGED BY AEGIS
HERE'S A SURVEILLANCE SHOT WE TOOK AT THE CONFERENCE SITE-- WE WERE CHECKING OUT PEOPLE WHO'VE ORDERED SUSPICIOUS LANDMATE PARTS THE DESIGN OF THE PARTS SUGGESTS THAT THE MAN ON THE RIGHT IS THE FATHER OF THE GIANT. SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW HIM--
Dr. SLADE
HIS PRESENT WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN. THE REAL PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IS THE GUY ON THE RIGHT. HE APPEARS TO HAVE ENTERED OLYMPUS IN DISGUISE WE HAVE NO DATA ON HIM, NOTHING AT ALL
A LEAK, MAYBE? SOMEBODY FED THE DATA TO THE OUTSIDE?
ONLY FOURTEEN PEOPLE ARE IN A POSITION TO KNOW ABOUT THE CONFERENCE. SIX OF THEM ARE YOU RIGHT HERE. THAT LEAVES EIGHT UNDER SUSPICION
THREE DAYS AGO WE DELIBERATELY LEAKED WORD THAT THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN PUSHED FORWARD THREE DAYS
THE FISH TOOK THE BAIT. WE'VE GOT THE HOOK IN HIS THROAT RIGHT NOW - HE'S UNDER INTERROGATION.
NOW I GET IT.

* "Bezekric"—or "the beautifully built house"—is the arcology complex and district in Olympus housing most embassies and public offices.


THIS IS A FOOLISH WAY TO ASSASSINATE A HIGH OFFICIAL THEY MUST KNOW THAT NO MATTER HOW QUICKLY THEY MOVE, WE CAN TRACE THEIR WEAPONS PROCUREMENTS THE WHOLE THING STINKS
WHETHER IT'S A CHALLENGE TO US OR JUST A LOUSY PLAN, IT'S STILL TOO AMATEURISH MAYBE IT'S JUST A DEMONSTRATION, POLITICAL PUBLICITY.
YOUR JOB IS TO FOLLOW EVERY LEAD FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON, AND CLEAN THEM OUT. LANCE IS IN TACTICAL COMMAND
THAT'S ALL QUESTIONS ?
DON'T FORGET THE BASICS MOVE WITH MAXIMUM CAUTION WE'LL DELIVER YOU TO THE SEALED OFF SECTOR WITH K2 CLASSIFIED EQUIPMENT.
MY ACHING BACK...
SUPER INTENDENT. CAN YOU GET US FIFTEEN KOTUS ROBOTS AND A GUN PLATFORM?
NO PROBLEM WHERE'S A PHONE ?
WHO, WHAT, WHERE, HOW, AND WHY...

KSHH
KSHH
VWHSSHH
VVVV
VVVV VVVV
DOES IT HURT?
YEAH, A BIT
GET YOUR ASS IN GEAR!!

LANCE!
?
I REALLY WONDER IF THAT GUY HAS A HEART OR SOUL? I DON'T FEEL A THING FROM HIM IT'S WEIRD
LANCE
WHY DON'T YOU ASK HIM?
WHY WON'T YOU USE ME?
YOU TELLIN' ME YOU TRUST LITTLE GIRLS AND THOSE FRIGGIN' BIOROIDS MORE THAN ME?!
I WANT THE LANDMATES ON STANDBY ONLY-- DON'T MOVE THEM WITHOUT DIRECT ORDERS FROM ME

LANCE!!
YOU'RE ASSIGNED TO COVER JIOLA AVENUE USE A GUGES D.
DAMMIT, LAN--
MORTON!!
JUST WAIT, WILL YOU?
IT'S NOTHING FORGET IT
PANI'

I WANT YOU TO, Y KNOW, TAKE CARE OF MORTON COULD YOU DO THAT FOR ME?
HEY, JUST HOLD ON A SECOND HERE! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?!
WHAAAAT?!
Aw, C'MON - YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. DON'T GIMME THAT LOOK!
GETTIN' A LITTLE FULL OF YOURSELF, AIN'T YOU BOY? FIRST YOU TALK ME INTO A DATE, THEN YOU STAND ME UP, NOW YOU WANT ME TO WORK THE NIGHT SHIFT?
GOD DAMN IT, MAGUS!!
DO IT FOR ME, HONEY!
Hrmph!
VVVVVVVVVVVV
YESSIR!
VVVV
DAMN YOU, MAGUS!
YOU GONNA PAY MY OVER TIME?!
YOW!

VERY BECOMING
MY PATCH? OR MY MAN?
THE SLICK WAY THE SI BOYS TRACKED THE PIGEONS AND THE SLOPPY WAY THEY HANDLED THE HOSTAGE/ WEAPONS SWAP. THEY JUST DON'T MESH
MAY BE A TRAP, eh?
PERPS IN S1?
WHST
GRAB FIRST TEAM.
KA-THK
THE CRIMINALS MAY BE PLANNING TO SET UP SOME POOR SAPS FROM NOWHERE AS THEIR FALL GUYS. IN THAT CASE, WE EITHER STAKE THEM OUT AND SETTLE IN FOR THE LONG HAUL OR WE TURN UP THE HEAT UNDER THEM. NOW
kSSshh
PLAIN CLOTHES INVESTIGATION FIRST. IF THE QUARRY CHANGES COURSE, WE COVER HIM IN DEPTH.
RIGHT.
FIVE TWELVE ROUND CLIPS OF 10mm A/P, PLUS FIRE UP THE SPIRIT.

KCHAK
STILL, I LIKE THE WAY THEY'RE PICKING A FIGHT WITH OLYMPUS AND BOTH AMERICAS STRAIGHT ON. YOU GOTTA GIVE 'EM CREDIT FOR BALLS.
ALL THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ARE LIKE THAT. WHAT THEY *DON'T* HAVE IS MONEY. THIS WHOLE OP COULD BE AN *AEGIS*-BACKED DIPLOMATIC PLOY.
CHUK
CLIK
KCHAK
BRIBERY, CORRUPTION, SLOTH, DIVORCE, ALCOHOLISM, DRUG ABUSE...
THE SOVIETS AND BOTH THE AMERICAS ARE GOING STRAIGHT DOWN THE TUBES.
WHCHAK
IT'S THE AGE OF IMPOTENT SUPER-POWERS...

THE PROMETHEAN BALANCE

MASAMUNE SHIROW

APPLESEED™

BOOK FOUR

THE PROMETHEAN BALANCE COLLECTS THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF ESWAT OPERATIVE DEUNAN AND HER CYBERNETIC COMPANION BRIAREOS AS THEY WORK TO STABILIZE THE UNEASY WORLD-WIDE PEACE THEY FOUGHT SO HARD TO ESTABLISH.... MASAMUNE SHIROW'S ACCLAIMED CYBERPUNK EPIC APPLESEED BOOK FOUR

ISBN 1-878574-52-3
51295
EAN
9 781878 574527

DARK HORSE COMICS

TFT
The Furry Triangles
We Love Beavers